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RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 000628

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/29/2019  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [VE](#) [PE](#)  
SUBJECT: ROSALES' ASYLUM: VENEZUELA RECALLS ITS AMBASSADOR

REF: A. LIMA 00602  
[1](#)B. LIMA 00589  
[1](#)C. CARACAS 00503

Classified By: Ambassador P. Michael McKinley for  
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In response to the Garcia administration's granting of political asylum to former Venezuelan presidential candidate and Maracaibo Mayor Manuel Rosales (ref B), the Venezuelan Ambassador was recalled to Caracas for consultations. While the GOP sought to soften the diplomatic blow by basing Rosales' asylum on humanitarian considerations, an APRA insider told us President Garcia had no hesitation in supporting the decision and "goading" his regional rival. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Immediately following Peru's April 27 decision to approve Rosales' asylum petition, Venezuela recalled its newly-accredited Ambassador to Peru, Aristides Medina Rubio to "evaluate" the bilateral relationship. GBRV authorities continue to maintain that Rosales illegally enriched himself when he was governor of oil-rich Zulia state and then skipped his court date (ref C). Venezuela has issued a warrant for his arrest. (Note: Rosales is at least the third Venezuelan leader to recently seek refuge in Peru. The others include the former Governor of Yaracuy Eduardo Lapi and President of the Venezuelan Workers Confederation Carlos Ortega. End Note.)

[1](#)3. (SBU) Meanwhile, Rosales' lawyer and APRA Congressman Javier Valle-Riestra indicated to the press that his client was obviously "very happy" with the GOP's decision. Most members of Congress also appear satisfied with the move. Among the exceptions were Ollanta Humala's Nationalist Party (PNP) members, several of whom highlighted that Caracas had cooperated on the extradition to Peru of President Fujimori's former intelligence chief Vladimir Montesinos. A Foreign Ministry official with responsibility for South America told us that the asylum decision need not have a long term impact on Peru's relations with Venezuela, including in its important commercial dimension.

[1](#)4. (C) President Garcia has publicly defended the Rosales decision by stating that, "Peru's first duty is to provide protection to someone who feels threatened" and tried to calm the waters by extolling the virtues of Venezuela's democracy. One APRA insider told us that President Garcia had no hesitation in supporting the decision, which was one reason the process took just over four days from start to finish. He added that, in addition to honoring Peru's democratic

commitments and the APRA party's history with asylum (ref A), Garcia took a certain pleasure in "goadng" Chavez, but without taking the point too far. GOP officials have underscored that one condition of Rosales' asylum was that he maintain a low profile and refrain from criticizing Chavez while here.

MCKINLEY